

APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR INSTALLING AND REMOVING A HARVESTING COMBINE ROTOR

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates generally to the field of agricultural crop harvesters. It relates particularly to agricultural crop harvesters such as combines and, more specifically, to an apparatus and method for installing and removing a harvesting combine rotor.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Modern harvesting combines are generally equipped with an enclosed operator's cab in which the operator is seated to control the harvesting operation of the machine. Operator cabs are typically located at the front of the combine and are fixedly mounted to the frame of the combine at a predetermined height. These combines also typically include a main body portion located behind the cab. The main body portion typically includes an outer housing and a rotary threshing assembly including a rotor disposed within the housing. When installed, the rotor typically extends along the length of the combine. The rotor may be installed and removed through a front end of the housing.

There are several disadvantages associated with the fixed cab arrangement. In particular, the cab cannot be raised to facilitate the installation and removal of the rotor from the front end of the combine. Moreover, there is no way for the operator to adjust the height of the cab relative to the remainder of the combine to improve the operator's vision and comfort. Finally, there is no way to lower the height of the cab for shipping and storage.

Accordingly, it would be desirable to have an apparatus and method for installing and removing a harvesting combine rotor that overcomes the disadvantages described above.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

One aspect of the invention provides an apparatus for installing and removing a harvesting combine rotor. A harvesting combine includes a frame portion and a linkage assembly operatively connected to the frame portion. A cab is operatively connected to the linkage assembly to allow the cab to be raised to allow the installation and removal of a combine rotor. The linkage assembly may preferably be rotatably connected to the frame portion. A

plurality of cab support mounts may be operatively connected to the linkage assembly and the cab may be mounted on the plurality of support mounts.

Another aspect of the invention provides an apparatus for installing and removing a harvesting combine rotor. A harvesting combine includes a body and a frame portion. A linkage assembly is operatively connected to the frame portion. A cab is spaced-apart from the body and is operatively connected to a linkage assembly to allow the cab to be raised to allow the installation and removal of a combine rotor. The rotor may preferably be installed and removed through a front end portion of the body. The combine may further include a housing having a front wall and the rotor may include a front end and a back end. The front end of the rotor may preferably be located adjacent the front wall of a housing and the rear end of the rotor may preferably extend upward from the front end.

Another aspect of the invention provides an apparatus for installing and removing a rotor from a harvesting combine. A harvesting combine includes a housing and a frame portion. A linkage assembly is operatively connected to the frame portion and a rotor is disposed within the housing. A cab is operatively connected to the linkage assembly to allow the cab to be raised to allow the removal of the rotor from the combine.

Another aspect of the invention provides a method of installing a rotor in a harvesting combine. A harvesting combine including a housing and a frame portion is provided. A linkage assembly is operatively connected to the frame portion. A cab is spaced-apart from the housing and is operatively connected to a linkage assembly. The cab is raised to an up position and the rotor is installed in the housing. The rotor may preferably be installed underneath the cab.

Another aspect of the invention provides a method of removing a rotor from a harvesting combine. A harvesting combine including a housing and a frame portion is provided. A linkage assembly is operatively connected to the frame portion and a rotor is disposed within the housing. A cab is operatively connected to the linkage assembly. The cab is raised to the up position and the rotor is removed from the housing. The rotor may preferably be removed underneath the cab.

The invention provides the foregoing and other features, and the advantages of the invention will become further apparent from the following detailed description of the presently preferred embodiments, read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings. The detailed

description and drawings are merely illustrative of the invention and do not limit the scope of the invention, which is defined by the appended claims and equivalents thereof.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a side view of a preferred embodiment of a cab arrangement for a harvesting combine, which is made in accordance with the invention;

FIG. 2 is an enlarged partial side view of the embodiment of **FIG. 1** showing the cab in the down position;

FIG. 3 is an enlarged partial side view of the embodiment of **FIG. 1** showing the right side of the cab;

FIG. 4 is an enlarged partial perspective view of the embodiment of **FIG. 1** showing the back wall of the cab;

FIG. 5 is an enlarged front view of the embodiment of **FIG. 1**;

FIG. 6 is a top view of the embodiment of **FIG. 3**;

FIG. 7 is a perspective view of a preferred embodiment of the platform with the back portion removed and the linkage assembly shown in the down position;

FIG. 8 is an enlarged view of the circled region of **FIG. 7**;

FIG. 9 is a side view of the embodiment of **FIG. 3** showing the cab in the up position;

FIG. 10 is a front view of the embodiment of **FIG. 5** showing the cab in the up position;

FIG. 11 is a top view of the embodiment of **FIG. 9**;

FIG. 12 is a perspective view of the embodiment of **FIG. 7** showing the linkage assembly in an up position; and

FIG. 13 is an enlarged view of the circled region of **FIG. 12**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PRESENTLY PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring to the drawings, and particularly to **FIG. 1**, a preferred embodiment of a cab arrangement for a self-propelled harvesting combine **10** is provided. The combine **10** is capable of harvesting crops such as, for example, corn, soybeans, and wheat. In the embodiment shown, the combine **10** includes an operator cab **12** and a body **14**. The body **14** may preferably include a housing **16** and various operating equipment such as, for example, a loop elevator assembly **18**, a grain tank **20**, a rotary threshing assembly including a rotor **22**, and a cleaning system including a chaffer sieve and a shoe sieve (not shown). The chaffer sieve and the shoe sieve are preferably

located below the rotor 22. The rotor 22 preferably includes a front end 23 and a back end 27. The front end 23 of the rotor 22 is located adjacent a front wall 29 of the housing 16 and the back end 27 extends upward from the front end 23 of the rotor 22. As shown in FIG. 1, the body 14 of the combine 10 is generally located behind the cab 12.

Referring to FIGS. 2-5, the cab 12 may preferably include a first side wall 26 (see FIG. 2) and a second side wall 28 (see FIG. 3) opposite the first side wall 26. The first side wall 26 of the cab 12 may preferably include a first transparent panel 30 and the second side wall 28 may preferably include a second transparent panel 32. The first and second transparent panels 30, 32 each may be comprised of glass. The cab 12 may also include a front curved transparent panel 34. The front curved transparent panel 34 may also preferably be comprised of glass.

As shown in FIGS. 1-3, the cab 12 is spaced-apart from the body 14 of the combine 10. As shown in FIG. 4, the cab 12 includes a back wall 36 that preferably includes a transparent window 38 that provides an operator seated in the cab 12 with enhanced visibility behind the cab 12. In the embodiment shown, the transparent window 38, together with the first and second transparent panels 30, 32 and the front curved transparent panel 34, provides substantially 360-degree visibility from the cab 12. The transparent window 38 may preferably be comprised of glass. One advantage of the spaced location of the cab 12 relative to the body 14 is that it provides ample distance between the cab 12 and the body 12 to provide an operator with enhanced visibility through the transparent window 38 of both the field and the various operating equipment located behind the cab 12. Also, the spaced location of the cab 12 relative to the body portion 14 of the combine 10 provides improved aesthetics for the combine 10.

Another advantage of the spaced location of the cab 12 relative to the body portion 14 of the combine 10 is that it allows a platform 40 (see FIGS. 2-4 and 6) to be positioned between the cab 12 and the body 14. In the embodiment shown in FIGS. 2-4 and 6, the platform 40 extends substantially around the back wall 36 and first and second side walls 26, 28 of the cab 12. The platform 40 may be comprised of a single structure or may be comprised of various sections depending upon the particular application. In addition, the shape and configuration of the platform 40 may vary depending upon the particular application. In the embodiment shown in FIGS. 4 and 6, for example, the platform 40 includes a first side portion 42, a second side portion 44, and a back portion 46. The first and second side portions 42, 44 of the platform 40 may each preferably include a guard railing 43 extending upward from the first and second side

portions 42, 44 along a portion of an outer perimeter 45 of the first and second side portions 42, 44. In the embodiment shown, the back portion 46 of the platform 40 includes a pair of step portions 48 located at opposite ends of the back portion 46. The platform 40 may be mounted to the frame of the combine 10 or any of the various support structures of combine 10. For example, in the embodiment shown in FIG. 7, the first side portion 42 of the platform 40 is mounted to and supported by a first horizontally oriented support member 50. Similarly, the second side portion 44 of the platform 40 is mounted to and supported by a second horizontally oriented support member 52. In the embodiment shown, the first support member 50 is substantially parallel to the second support member 52.

Referring to FIG. 7, a bridge member 54 has a first end portion 56 connected to the first support member 50 and a second end portion 58 connected to the second support member 52. The back portion 46 of the platform 40 may preferably be releasably attached to the bridge member 54. The first support member 50 is attached to a first vertical frame portion 55 (see FIG. 3) of the combine 10 and the second support member 52 is attached to a second vertical frame portion 57 (see FIG. 2) of the combine 10. The first and second support members 50, 52 and the platform 40 may preferably extend above the two front wheels 60, 62 of the combine 10 (see FIGS. 2-3).

Referring to FIGS. 2-3, the cab 12, the body 14, and the platform 40 define a passageway 70. In the embodiment shown, the passageway 70 is formed between the back wall 36 of the cab 12, the back portion 46 of the platform 40, and a front wall 29 of the housing 16. The width of the passageway 70, as defined by the distance (designated as A in FIG. 2) between the back wall 36 of the cab 12 and the front wall 29 of the housing 16, may preferably be approximately 18-20 inches. The back portion 46 of the platform 40 is positioned between the back wall 36 of the cab 12 and the front wall 29 of the housing 16 and may preferably have a width (designated as B in FIG. 6) of approximately 18-20 inches. Accordingly, the platform 40 and the passageway 70 allow an operator to walk along the platform 40 through the passageway 70 directly behind the cab 12 to visually monitor and access the various operating equipment of the combine 10 from the platform 40.

Referring to FIGS. 7 and 12, the cab 12 is mounted to a plurality of cab support mounts 80. The cab support mounts 80 are in turn connected to a linkage assembly 82. The linkage assembly 82 is rotatably connected to the first and second support members 50, 52. The linkage

assembly 82 may be any conventional linkage assembly such as, for example, a four bar linkage, that allows the cab 12 to be raised and lowered. FIG. 7 shows the linkage assembly 82 in the down position and FIG. 12 shows the linkage assembly 82 in the up position. The linkage assembly 82 may also be raised or lowered by any conventional means such as, for example, a conventional hydraulic cylinder that provides hydraulic pressure. The linkage assembly 82 may also be raised and lowered with a ball screw or worm-gear drive. Alternatively, as shown in FIGS. 3 and 9, the linkage assembly 82 may be coupled to the feeder housing 84 of the combine 10 with a removable support rod 86. In this manner, the up and down movement of the feeder housing 84 may be used to raise or lower the linkage assembly 82. There are several advantages associated with being able to raise and lower the cab 12. In particular, an operator can adjust the height of the cab 12 relative to the remainder of the combine 10 to improve the operator's comfort and vision. Moreover, the cab 12 can be lowered to the down position for shipping and storage of the combine 10. Finally, the linkage assembly 82 provides a means to raise the cab 12 to facilitate the installation and removal of the rotor 22 underneath the cab 12 through a front end portion 31 of the body 14 (see FIG. 1).

To install the rotor 22 through the front portion 31 of the body 14 the cab 12 is raised to the up position (see FIGS. 9-11). As shown in FIGS. 9 and 11, when the cab 12 is being raised, the rotational movement of the linkage assembly 82 causes the cab 12 to move in a backward direction toward the front wall 29 of the housing 16. As a result, the back portion 46 of the platform 40 may preferably be removed from the bridge member 54 so that the back portion 46 does not interfere with the movement of the cab 12. When the cab 12 is in the up position, the rotor 22 is installed through the front end portion 31 of the body 14 underneath the cab 12. When the rotor 22 is installed, the cab 12 may then be lowered to the desired operating height. The back portion 46 of the platform 40 may then be reattached to the bridge member 54.

To remove the rotor 22 through the front end portion 31 of the housing 16, the cab 12 is raised to the up position (see FIGS. 9-11). Again, the back portion 46 of the platform 40 may preferably be removed so that it does not interfere with the movement of the cab 12. When the cab 12 is in the up position, the rotor 22 is removed through the front end portion 31 of the body 14 underneath the cab 12.

While the embodiments of the invention disclosed herein are presently considered to be preferred, various changes and modifications can be made without departing from the spirit and

scope of the invention. The scope of the invention is indicated in the appended claims, and all changes that come within the meaning and range of equivalents are intended to be embraced therein.